Pricing of Petroleum Products

421. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether demands have been made from various quarters to inquire into the reason behind the Government's decision to reduce the price of Naptha and charging higher on diesel, petrol and kerosene despite sharp fall in international price of petroleum products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that kickbacks are involved in changing the policy of Government on Naptha and other petroleum products; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Government announced a comprehensive package to end the oil pool deficit on September 1, 1997. The Government also decided that henceforth the price of HSD would be on improt parity basis. Accordingly, the ex-storage point price of HSD has been revised as under:

Effective dates	Ex-storage point price (excluding excise duty etc.) Rs./KL
07.11.97	7918.04
25.12.97	7996.84
01.03.98	7839.24
04.04.98	7645.47
20.05.98	7536.89
09.01.99	6722.37

The prices of petrol and Kerosene are administered by the Government and recently there was no increase in the prices of these products. As per the details of the phased dismantling of administered pricing mechanism, the prices of certain products like Naphtha, F.O., LSHS, LDO etc. are decontrolled effective 1.4.98 and accordingly their selling prices are fixed by oil companies on market considerations. Policies & pricing in respect of petroleum products are transparent.

Progress in Exploration of Hydro-Carbons

422. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of exploration efforts in the field of hydrocarbons since 1992-93;

(b) whether it is a fact that the pace of discovery of new reserves has considerably slowed down;

(c) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(d) what steps are being taken to accelerate the pace of exploration activity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Following exploratory efforts have been made by ONGC/OIL/J.V. Private companies and Directorate General of Hydrocarbon (DGH) in various basins of India since 1992-93 to 1997-98:

Seismic Survey	
Onland	
2D Standard Line Kilometer	149322
2D Ground Line Kilometer	23865
3D Standard Square Kilometer	5253
3D Square Kilometer	167
3D Ground Line Kilometer	11744
Offshore (2D + 3D)	
Line Kilometer	319636
Square Kilometer	2649
Exploratory drilling	
Offshore ('000M)	628.1
Onshore ('000M)	2336.4
Total ('000M)	2964.5